



FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL PRESS RELEASE

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HIGHWAY PATROL OFFERS SAFETY TIPS IN HEIGHT OF HURRICANE SEASON

~ Precautionary steps for a Safer Florida ~

TALLAHASSEE – As Florida recovers from Tropical Storm Fay and prepares for Tropical Storm Gustav, it is a good time to remind drivers of important safety precautions to reduce the number of storm-related, vehicle fatalities.

“The Florida Highway Patrol works very hard to keep our highways safe, but we need drivers to do their part too, especially when inclement weather affects driving conditions,” said Colonel John Czernis, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol. “Together we can lead the way to a *Safer Florida*.”

The Florida Highway Patrol urges drivers to follow safety tips that can save lives.

- Stay put – Avoid driving in heavy storms, and stay in a safe place after the storm. Be prepared to remain where you are for an extended period of time. Often, injuries and deaths occur in the aftermath of storms. Sightseers impeding roadways cause obstacles for emergency personnel responding to those in need.
- Slow down – The roads remain slick after the storm so if you have to drive, decrease your speed to avoid hydroplaning.
- Buckle up – When it is finally safe to venture out, take the extra time to buckle your seatbelt. It is the law in Florida, and statistics continue to show that seatbelts save lives. Four of the reported deaths related to Tropical Storm Fay involved motorists who were not wearing their seatbelts.
- Be cautious of high winds – Windy conditions adversely affect all vehicles, particularly high profile vehicles, such as buses and trucks, as well as motorcycles. Gusty wind makes driving difficult, especially when it is rapidly changing speed and direction.

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FHP Offers Safety Tips

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- Turn around; don't drown – Prepare for standing water. Never drive through flooded areas, even if you are familiar with the roads. The area of roadway you cannot see beneath the water may be washed out or the water may conceal debris, tree branches or even power lines.
- Pay attention – You may come up on an intersection that is no longer controlled by a traffic control device. If a police officer is directing traffic, follow their directions. Otherwise, treat the intersection as you would treat an intersection governed by a four-way Stop sign.

For real-time traffic and road condition reports, as well as maps and additional safety tips, FHP encourages motorists to visit www.flhsmv.gov/fhp/. Florida drivers can also call 511 on their cell phone for up-to-the-minute updates on traffic congestion, road construction, lane closures, severe weather and travel delays on Interstates and major highways.

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles encourages anyone with a valid Florida driver license or identification card to go online to www.flhsmv.gov and enter their emergency contact information. This vital information gives law enforcement immediate access to this information in cases of an emergency, which makes it easier for them to contact a family member or friend.

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